

# NEWS

The East Asia Christian Conference is an organ of continuing fellowship and co-operation among the Churches and Christian Councils in East Asia.  
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## EACC AFFIRMS RACISM STAND OF THE WCC

BANGKOK - Anticipating discussion which would take place at Addis Abba where the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches is presently meeting, U Kyaw Than, General Secretary of the East Asia Christian Conference, in a communication to Dr. Eugene Carson Blake, affirmed the action of the Executive Committee of the WCC, to combat Racism, taken on September 3, 1970, at Arnoldshain, Germany.

In his communique to the General Secretary, U Kyaw Than said: "While study and consultations are important in themselves, we are also obliged not only to study and make statements, but to implement with concrete action, the ideals we speak of in our studies and statements. When glaring acts of discrimination are practised, the churches will need to point out to those concerned, the incompatibility of these acts with the purpose of God for mankind. It will be a sad day for the Church," he said, "if she has to act only when we are sure no quarters are going to be offended and no risks are involved."

The International Advisory Committee of the Programme to Combat Racism had created a Special Fund to disburse funds to groups struggling for racial justice in various parts of the world, including some labelled "subversive" by their respective white minority governments.

Although the WCC had received angry criticism and expressions of bewilderment, some Asian churches had already joined those who had given enthusiastic support. The National Christian Council of Japan, the Council of Churches of Indonesia, and the New Zealand Race Relations Council gave support both in spirit and in substance. In Australia there was mixed reception by the various groups within the churches.

U Kyaw Than asserted that the EACC had given attention to the matter of "white racism" and to the WCC's earlier statement proposed at Canterbury in 1969. He referred to the exchanges between the EACC Secretariat and the Australian Council of Churches regarding the plans to arrange a meeting in 1971 to provide Asian and Australian churchmen with opportunity to exchange views on "white racism" in the EACC area.

He commended the Committee to Combat Racism on the release of information of movements and organizations receiving grants and concluded, "If we have precise facts and data, the churches in Asia might in their own way contribute toward the steps Asian national governments may take in denying in our own region economic opportunities to some of the enterprises which play crucial roles in Africa or elsewhere, influencing discriminatory and exploitative practices there."

Relevant to the "racism" issue as far as the EACC is concerned, U Kyaw Than said that preliminary steps have been taken to analyze the problems of relations between overseas Chinese and Indian peoples and the peoples of South



East Asia nations. A consultation on the Chinese diaspora is to be held in 1971 in Hong Kong. The discussions are expected to touch on the socio-economic as well as cultural and religious issues. Ethnic tensions between minority tribal groups and the majority peoples as well as the subject of tensions between majority population and immigrant people, i.e. Koreans in Japan, are also concerns which are being studied by the EACC.

#### PROMINENT CHRISTIAN EMBRACES ISLAM

SINGAPORE - David Stephens, Malaysia's High Commissioner to Australia, his wife and their five children became Muslims in a ceremony held at the residence of Tun Mustapha, Chief Minister of Sabah, at which "more than 200 others embraced Islam" according to a recent press report from Singapore.

Stephens had been the traditional leader of the Kadazans, a tribal group in Sabah estimated to number about one-third of the population. Until December 1967 he had led the political party that represented the Kadazans in the State government.

A commentator said: "The Kadazans, whose leadership is often Christian, hope for participation in Sabah's political life have been aborted in spite of the fact that they are bumiputra (sons of the soil) and the true citizens of Sabah."

The Tun Mustapha who according to some is known for blunt pronouncements, stated that the Christians are not making progress in converting the people of Sabah to their faith. "Their own failure in doing their work has been indicated by the fact that the Christian churches have been established for more than 80 years in Sabah and yet the percentage of Christians remains unchanged - 16% - if not reduced." Against this, a spokesman claimed that the Kadazans and Chinese Christians match the Muslims about one to one and that Christians continue to gain about as many converts as do Muslims.

Asked to comment on this news (also Dec. 15, 1970), the EACC General Secretary underlined the need for speeding up the development of indigenous leadership in all Asian churches and the necessity of conscious programmes which would deepen the faith of the laity.

"As in many other countries in Asia, the situation in Sabah brings out in sharp relief three challenges which the churches must face without further delay: Firstly, there is the challenge to the churches to earn the trust and confidence of society at large that their members are responsible patriots not so much concerned with safeguarding "communal" rights as preserving abiding values for the whole nation. Secondly, there cannot be further delay in developing church leadership indigenous to the country, and thirdly, in taking steps to deepen the faith and commitment of the Christian laity involved in society and facing its pressure."

#### ACS MOVES TO INDIGENISE PROGRAMME

BANGKOK - Indigenisation will play a major role in the programme of Asian Christian Service during 1971, as national advisory committees in Laos and Vietnam take increasing responsibility for the planning and implementation of projects.

This decision was affirmed by the Reference Committee of Asian Christian Service meeting in Bangkok, December 16 - 17, 1970.

The Advisory Committees work with the concept that the most effective way to help Vietnam and Laos and their peoples is to strengthen local groups, encourage and develop local leadership at every level, and to promote self-sustaining projects in national development. Able and concerned national leaders are working with ACS staff.



The Reference Committee confirmed twelve new appointments for continuing work with ACS in 1971. Some thirteen volunteers had ended their terms of service with ACS during the past year. The current programme and administrative staff total thirty-seven in Vietnam, twenty-six in Laos and five in overall administration inclusive of national staff in each country.

The Rev. Jorge Quismundo, Philippines, was appointed to be the Programme Officer with overall responsibility for Asian Christian Service. He had served for six months in that capacity in Laos.

A budget asking for \$438,676 was approved by the Reference Committee to underwrite the plans for continuing and new projects which are being implemented.

The Committee also looked at its relationships with the relevant committees in WCC/DICARWS and underlined its traditional necessity of having direct dealings with the Asia desk of DICARWS, while keeping the Vietnam desk informed of particular issues.

Present for the Reference Committee were Dr. Peter Wong, Treasurer of the EACC, Hong Kong, Vice Chairman; the Rev. Harvey L. Perkins, Secretary for Inter-Church Aid Mission and Service, Australia, EACC; U Kyaw Than, General Secretary, EACC; Mr. Kentaro Buma, Japan, and Mr. Nguyen-Tang Canh, Chairman and Secretary respectively for Vietnam Sub-committee, DICARWS. Staff members of ACS present were: Mr. Sam Isaac, Director; Mr. Jorge Quismundo, Programme Officer; Mr. Masaichi Yamashita, Field Director Vietnam; Mr. Eric Daniels, Field Director Laos; Mrs. Ruth Cadwallader, Information Secretary; and Mrs. Tessa Miranda, Secretary to Mr. Isaac.

#### EACC OFFICERS CONFER

BANGKOK - During the past weeks the General Secretary of the EACC has had the opportunity to confer with all the officers of the East Asia Christian Conference as they have visited Bangkok. Conversations dwelt on finances and policy structure of the EACC.

Bishop Chiu Ban It, Acting Chairman, Singapore, was present on December 15 to meet with Dr. Peter Wong, Treasurer, Hong Kong, here for the Reference Committee of ACS, and U Kyaw Than. Mathew Ogawa, Associate General Secretary, Japan, had been here during the SEARV Meeting, December 10-12 and stopped again briefly on January 14.

Dr. Won Yong Kang, Vice Chairman, Korea, spent January 11 in Bangkok in conferences with the General Secretary. Both Dr. Kang and Mr. Ogawa were en-route to Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, where they would attend the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches.

#### 'DOUBLE SADNESS' FOR INDONESIA

DJAKARTA - Dr. A.M. Tambunan, 59, Honorary Chairman of the Council of Churches in Indonesia died on December 12, 1970. He was buried with State honours in Djakarta.

Dr. Tambunan, one of the founders of the Christian Political Party of Indonesia (PERKINDO) in 1945, was minister for social affairs in the Indonesian Cabinet. He was also chairman of the Board of the Union Theological Seminary in Djakarta. He had served the cause of Christ very effectively during his lifetime and was active in the Student Christian Movement during student days. He was very much a valued member and contributor to the thinking of the World Council's Commission of the Churches on International Affairs. His death is a tremendous loss to the church in Indonesia.



On December 28, 1970, the Rev. Karimuda Sitompul, 54, Secretary for Unity for the Council of Churches of Indonesia, died of a heart attack which came upon him while he was addressing a team of Australian youth there for a work camp.

A former Secretary General of the well known Batak Church (Huria Kristen Batak Protestan) of Indonesia, Mr. Sitompul assisted in the preparations for the Prapat Conference of the East Asia Christian Conference in 1957 and remained a staunch and creative supporter of the EACC.

The EACC member churches and councils join in the bereavement of Indonesian Christians in their loss of these two brothers in Christ, and also give thanks for their faithful witness.

#### EPCC REHABILITATION PROGRAMME UNDERWAY

DACCA - The East Pakistan Christian Council has drawn up a rehabilitation programme that could cost up to \$300,000 and would work in three areas, according to a recent announcement.

In Sonathola, where Christian families reside in the Patuakhali district, an emergency relief team organized by the Council, had already begun relief measures in fourteen villages shortly after the disaster struck. The programme proposes to feed about 250 families for twelve months. They will be assisted to rebuild their houses and an agricultural programme will be started. Agriculturists are needed at Khepupura, the District center and at Barisal where they would assist in teaching new methods of agriculture. Other needs are - seeds, cattle and tube wells.

In Khulna, another area which lost crops and housing, 1475 families in 12 villages will be helped with food, housing material, clothing, cattle and seeds for a 3 - 6 month period. A group of lay people will run this programme and no foreign personnel are required.

At Kaligram there is also need for help in rebuilding, feeding and mounting an agricultural programme for 100 families. The local Christian community will oversee the work and ask for an agricultural worker to assist in getting the agricultural programme going.

#### West Pakistan Responds to Need

As a result of an appeal made by the West Pakistan Christian Council, a total of Rs. 61,000 has been sent to the President's Relief Fund for East Pakistan aid, according to Mr. William K. Mall, Executive Secretary of the West Pakistan Christian Council on December 28.

The churches and institutions of the WPCC, as well as the Salvation Army and other local groups contributed to the fund. A sum of Rs. 2,500 was made available for a team of five volunteers, including two nurses, to help in the relief operations in East Pakistan.

#### Japan Sends Agriculturists

Mr. Kazuho Makino, an agricultural missionary with six years experience, (a rice specialist) in South East Asia, and Dr. Toshihiro Takami, Director of the East Asia Christian Leaders Training course at Tsurukawa Rural Institute, have volunteered to go to East Pakistan and assist in the programme of rehabilitation. Makino expressed the spirit in which the two men go when he says, "I am going to work in the fields with the people of East Pakistan, not to be director or leader. The Pakistanis will need to be able to think and act independently, otherwise they cannot improve themselves."



FAO Makes Significant Contribution

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, whose regional office is located in Bangkok, has authorized \$4 million in aid for East Pakistan. Asserting that there will be long-term needs for food to help feed more than one million people who will be unable to grow anything in their salt-soaked soil until the next monsoon washes it clean, FAO plant experts will attempt to identify varieties of millet and other crops resistant to salt and tolerant to winter conditions in East Pakistan.

Because of the destruction of livestock, a quick source of protein is needed, therefore, the restocking of livestock and poultry is urgently needed as well as livestock drugs and vaccines to curb livestock disease hazards, the release said.

KOREAN AND AMERICAN CHRISTIANS CONSULT

EACC - Korean and American Christians explored international relations between the two countries in a consultation called "Dilemmas and Opportunities" which took place at Korean Christian Academy in December, it was reported here by Dr. Won Yong Kang, Director of the Academy.

Thirteen consultants from the National Council of Christian Churches of the USA and thirty from the National Christian Council of Korea discussed in depth, three major concerns: security and peace; cultural encounter and tradition; and national development.

The exchange between the two groups served to clarify the tensions which exist in regard to US Foreign Policy and Korea's need for freedom and justice as well as a minimum deterrent for defence.

The group proposed the establishment of a study centre preferably under the auspices of the EACC, which could continue to stimulate conversations regarding international relations in Northeast Asia. Such a centre could enable accurate information to flow between countries, and prepare an educational strategy through which freedom and justice could penetrate the societies.

The Honourable Dr. Paik Nak Choon, former Speaker of the ROK Assembly, was chairman of the meeting and Dr. Won Yong Kang served as the organizing secretary. Speakers from Korea were Messrs. Chun Hae Chong, Young Hak Hung and Young Rok Koo. Among the Americans present were: Dr. R. S. Bilheimer, International Affairs, NCC USA; Dr. Maynard Catchings, an Executive of the United Church of Christ, USA; and Professor J. Baldwin, Columbia University.

EACC STAFF MEMBER HONOURED

SEOUL - Dr. Jong Sung Rhee, Northeast Region Secretary for the Theological Education and Ministry Committee of the EACC, is President-elect of the Presbyterian Theological Seminary, Seoul, Korea. He will assume his new duties in the near future. He succeeds Dr. Il Seung Kay, who is retiring. Dr. Rhee has been the Dean of the Seminary. He was one of the speakers at the Congress on Evangelism held in Singapore in July, 1970.

-- N O T I C E --

To all readers of the EACC News (except EACC members) who have not responded to our November Circular: We call your attention to the "new rates" policy outlined in the circular and urge you to indicate how you will respond. If we do not hear from you, this will be your last issue of the EACC News.

- the Editor -



## CELT PLANS EDUCATION FOR CHANGE

EACC - "A growing number of Christian workers in East Asian churches, accept that men and women, lay and clergy, young and old are all called to new and old forms of witness and service in the midst of immense political and social, religious and cultural changes. Many are demanding that for such tasks, they be recognised, equipped and released, in more effective ways."

So wrote the Rev. John England, Christian Education and Lay Training (CELT) Secretary for the EACC, after an intensive four months of travel. Mr. England had returned to Perth, Australia, on December 20 having attended the Sub-Regional Youth and Laity Course at Gotemba, Japan, and making contacts with relevant people for Christian education and laity work in Indonesia, Taiwan and Hong Kong.

Jointly with World Council Staff members, Dr. Ralph Young and Dr. Will Kennedy, the EACC Secretary has been establishing working relationships between 'Christian', 'Theological' and 'Laity' educators so that the tasks of liberation, development and lay formation can be met with joint resources and some sense of purpose.

Encouraging existing work was found where consistent pioneering is being done to reshape or recreate the education and missional tools by which the people of God, both within and beyond the gathered Church, are assisted to carry out today's work.

Singapore: a congregation uses a series of Sunday evenings for group studies especially designed to open up the challenging possibilities of mission to men and society.

Taiwan: seminaries, jointly with lay academies and Industrial projects, conduct seminars and field training in developing urban ministries for lay folk and clergy alike.

Japan: a team of educators from a wide range of church-related and state agencies study and assess some of the key issues facing education as a whole along with the relationship of the Church's mission to these.

Indonesia: seminars and courses for occupational and community groups for new members and for pastors, for social concern as well as church building, are linked with "rice roots" local leadership in a Lay Centre.

Korea, Philippines, India, Thailand, Singapore and Japan: laity and industrial programmes provide labour education and grapple with community issues; Roman Catholic and Protestants co-operate in training for community self-organization; Rural Life Centre and Urban Projects develop courses for laymen and clergy where supervised experience is integrated with disciplines, theory and reflection.

"However," Mr. England pointed out, "if we accept the Church's total mission to the integral and human development of each country and culture, much more of our attention must be focussed upon the critical questions which face national education, that is, the relation of manpower needs to human values; diminishing resources for increasing numbers of learners at all ages; the aping of dysfunctional, western patterns of education; the integration of content with attitudes, skills and action; the relationships of 'teacher' to 'learners'; planned and unplanned learning; and the educational challenges presented as we attempt to live with change."

Therefore, national workshops are being planned by the national and CELT committees, to take place during the next two years which emphases and aims will be the outgrowth of particular concerns and the situation and needs of each nation.



a s i a n c h r i s t i a n s e r v i c e n e w s

CONTEXT IN WHICH ACS WORKS - DIRECTOR'S REPORT

June - December 1970

by Samuel M. Isaac

Cambodia

Laos

Vietnam

January 15, 1971

Vietnam: The stalemate at Paris continues; and increasingly there seems to be little prospect of an early negotiated peace in Vietnam. Military activity reached a lull point during the third quarter of the year, leading many observers to believe that the war would gradually "die down" with a whimper. However, there has been a renewal of actions at various fronts in South Vietnam, and American air actions over North Vietnam may also have their repercussions. No known success or consequences have resulted out of the recent American effort to free American POWs from North Vietnam, and the attention focused on the condition of prisoners in South Vietnam is stated to have provided some improvements in prisons.

In the home front in South Vietnam, there was the forced occupation and construction of shelters on public and private property by war veterans, the consequent action by the government, and what now seems to be a controlled situation in this regard, the veterans having quietened down. Student unrest, leading to the closure of universities for a good part of this period, and the mass arrest, and subsequent release of a large number of students have also indicated another front which the government has had to face during this period.

The official devaluation of the piastre from 118 to 272.20 to the US dollar at the end of September did not bring about such grave consequences as were feared by many, and there are indications that this has in some measure controlled the "black market" effectively. However, not only have "luxury" items like refrigerators, TVs and motorcycles, etc. gone beyond the buying capacity of the ordinary man, but also the cost of living in terms of basic commodities has gone up. The Saigon retail price index based on 100 points in January 1965 opened at 626 points in January 1970 for food, and reached 778 points by the end of the first week of October, and for non-food items, it opened at 420 points at the end of the same period, according to USAID sources.

Expressions of concern for "peace" are more distinctly and freely heard in South Vietnam during this period than ever before, and "proposals for peace" by South Vietnam deputies have been reported from time to time. However, the average person seems to be growing weary of war, and increasingly weary of hoping and waiting for peace.

Sporadic commando and harassment actions have threatened security from time to time, but there is no significant change in this regard.

A major natural calamity took place in the central region of South Vietnam early in October. A cyclone caused the death of 1,000 and left 200,000 persons homeless.

Laos: During the middle of the year, there seemed to be some very real prospects of "peace talks" between the government and the Pathet Lao. Proposals were made, counter-proposals were stated; negotiating teams were named, and even a location for the talks in Pathet Lao territory was agreed upon. But these hopes seem to be fizzling out, with no clear reasons: and at any rate the prospect of early negotiations seems to be remote.

In the meanwhile, the "dry season" offensives seem to have begun in some fronts, and the government forces are stated to have suffered reverses in the northeastern sector and in the south.

Within the last week, the planning of a "rightist coup" by military officials in the southern region has been reported, as well as the possible arrest of the officials involved.

The economy has been stable, and no major refugee movements have taken place.



Security remains as uncertain as it has always been on major highways and the rural areas, while the cities under government control have remained secure throughout the period.

Cambodia: The war has certainly "escalated" in Cambodia during this period, and a "war pattern" has been established. The initial US ground action within Cambodian territory against the Communists had ceased by the beginning of this period, but ARVN troops continued to stay and fight along with the Cambodian army while US air cover had continued to assist the government troops. The Cambodian army had grown from an initial strength of 35,000 at the beginning of the hostilities in March 1970 to about 200,000 by mid November, and increasingly, they are being better equipped.

The government seems to have established itself compared to the precarious state it was in earlier, and has politically shown greater stability, and major success in its relationship with other countries. Economic, military and relief aid has been flowing in increasingly, and the government looks forward to a 200 million US dollar economic aid from the United States early next year, apart from the current military aid worth 50 million US dollars, mostly in small arms, and supportive military hardware, and possibly more of it. Growing tensions have, however, been noted between the Cambodian army and the ARVN, and similar situations have also been reported between the Khmer rouge and the Vietnamese communists.

The economy seems to be in ruins; rubber and rice exports have dwindled to zero; and tourists no longer visit Cambodia. It is stated that rubber plantations have been so badly destroyed that it would take decades to bring them back to post-war production level.

On the other hand, prices have remained relatively stable, food seems to be available in adequate quantities in Phnom Penh as well as in the rest of the country, and the value of the Cambodian riel, having plummeted from 65 to 110 in the black market, seems to have stabilized itself around 100 to the US dollar: the official rate being 55 riels to one US dollar.

The Khmers, on both sides, seem to show a surprising degree of determination to "fight for peace." Movement within the country remains practically impossible, and the road from Phnom Penh to Saigon, which has been the last link open for the beleaguered city has been cut during the past week.

One hundred sixty thousand Vietnamese left Cambodia for South Vietnam by the end of August, and about an equal number still remain, but no longer in camps. Their freedom of movement, however, still continues to be uncertain, and military actions in each vicinity has its direct consequences on this freedom.

About 300,000 Cambodian refugees are stated to be in and around Phnom Penh, while there is no clear estimate of the total number of persons displaced from their homes due to the conflict. The situation remains fluid and it seems impossible to estimate figures accurately. While large quantities of relief aid seem to have been offered by several countries, and considerable quantities to have reached Phnom Penh, the special governmental Commission in charge of refugees seem to lack both manpower and logistic support to work effectively even within the territory under governmental control.

Recent "incidents" in Phnom Penh seem to indicate that communist commandos have infiltrated the city, and the war is often being fought at surprisingly close distances from the capital.

Yet, the average man seems to be determined to "win the war to maintain his freedom", and voluntary enlistment still seems to bring large numbers of both men and women into the army.